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The Kahuna as Professional and Organizational Development Specialists

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In this paper, we invite you to return to explore the ways of our professional development ancestors, for their processes were based on principles that are universal and therefore carry power to other cultures and times.

One New Year's Day, as our extended family was sharing hopes, dreams, and goals, a guest suggested that the Huna ways were similar to some values and practices we were seeking to develop in our work in the University. This remark started a journey of discovery to people, places, and materials that confirmed the initial hypothesis and opened the door to a steady flow of useful and applicable information. We developed a deep respect for the traditions and history of the Hawaiian Islands, and appreciation of the processes and power the kahunas trained themselves to use wisely.

The ancient kahunas of Hawaii, the Keepers of the Secret, were versatile mystics who were the professionals and the developers of professionals in their culture. They were experts in many fields, such as psychology, navigation, architecture, botany, geology, astronomy, healing

arts, and spiritual arts. They believed both in power and in the right use of power, and the basic sin identified in the culture was to bring harm to another person. Many of the tales of black magic are said to be the result of "school drop-outs," those who learned enough to get a taste of power and then dropped out of the program before grounding themselves in the universal purpose of power. This evidence of human frailty or poor judgment is certainly not limited to this Polynesian culture. In the days when encounter groups were new and marathons did not refer to races, there were those, who, after attending a session, were amazed at the break-throughs observed, and without awareness of the skills needed to facilitate such groups successfully, set out to lead their own sessions, sometimes with very unfortunate results. There are no shortcuts to professional expertise in any culture.

The kahunas use several principles and practices that are applicable to the work of professional and organizational developers in higher education. First, they are disciplined and committed to rigorous and extensive training. They accept the necessity for wholeness, integrity, and singlemindedness of purpose as a part of professionalism. They develop all of their powers to an extent that surprises us, for we often do not expect much of ourselves. We do not realize our capacity to become more fully who we really are. The choice to undertake the kahuna training was not taken lightly, for it meant a lifelong total commitment to serving, and there was no space for other than total commitment. Wavering in purpose or loss of integrity had harsh consequences. The choice also meant a commitment to pass along the knowledge—the Secret—to the next generation, for the aged ones had the mandate to plant the seeds of power in the leaders of the future. This practice of generativity kept the Secret alive for the many years when it was outlawed. As a part of that spirit of generativity, some kahunas are now openly teaching the principles, seeing them as universal truths to be made available to those who are drawn to hear them.

Second, the kahunas know and use the power of words. The word is seen as an extension of the soul, and carries

that soul's mana or vital force with it. Naming carries power. One's word or declaration carries power. How an object or person is described carries power. We are just now beginning to realize the extent to which this is true in our institutions. The university mission statement, the catalog copy, the public relations brochures, press coverage—all can shape the image of the organization for the faculty as well as the general public. An avalanche of criticism and negativity can create a self-fulfilling prophecy that makes concrete what was at first only words. Conversely, a powerful vision described in metaphor and articulated with hope can awaken and focus a group on positive actions and lead to achievements that confound the skeptics and doom-sayers. We have found that when people communicate across disciplines and department boundaries and articulate their values, the seeds of institutional pride and loyalty are planted and nourished.

Third, the kahunas know and use the power of visual imagery to bring about change. In the great Ha prayer rite, a very detailed visualization is sent to the High Self daily until vision is manifested as reality. This ritual of positive images is similar to more contemporary western methods of visual imagery used in a variety of creative problem solving approaches. In our culture, this power has been acknowledged by persons such as Maxwell Maltz (1969) and Eva Schindler-Rainman and Ron Lippitt in their "Images of Potentiality" exercise (Fox, Lippitt, & Schindler-Rainman, 1973). Ira Progoff, creator of the intensive journal process (1975), uses many guided meditations to help persons get in touch with the meaning and direction of their lives. His "Dialogue with Inner Wisdom" exercises enable participants in his workshops to tap into a very different mode of knowing than is ordinarily available, and to obtain guidance and clarification about areas of concern. Jean Houston, psychologist and Director of the Foundation for Mind Research in New York, describes an exercise called "Skill Rehearsal with a Master Teacher" (1982). Appended to this paper is an exercise which similarly provides an experience and a process for consciously gaining access to and using the inner wisdom we all possess. Detailed

positive imaging is a useful tool of professional and organizational development practitioners.

Fourth, the kahunas know that mediation of conflict takes place at several levels, for, whatever the outward appearance, the healing must first occur in the spirit in a place outside of time. Ho'oponopono is a process that was developed by the early Polynesians for healing conflicts. Pukui, Haertig, and Lee (1972, p. 60) explain that ho'o means "to make, cause or bring about;" pono means "correct, right, in perfect order;" ponopono (reduplicate), means "in order, cared for, attended to." Both forms connote what is socially-morally approved and desirable. The process, then, is a means to bring about order in a family, restoring good relationships and attending to the needs and concerns of all members. If persons were found to be in conflict with another person in the immediate family, in the extended family, or in the tribal group, they were invited to participate in a group process to solve and heal the conflict. It was assumed that conflict had not only a psychological dimension but also spiritual and physical dimensions, and that all dimensions needed to be healed. If either of the protagonists had experienced illness or accident in the weeks preceding or during the outbreak of a conflict, this was assumed to be related to the conflict. It was also assumed that any solution or healing of the conflict would bring about spiritual, physical, and psychological changes for the better.

In the Hawaiian culture, the cohesion and group movement toward solution is provided by the commonly held value system. What have we in higher education to serve us similarly when we meet conflict? There are value traditions held by most people in higher education, and these may provide such a foundation if indeed they are embraced by the persons involved.

Universities are beginning to realize that just as the most successful companies are clear about their corporate culture and values, (Peters & Waterman, 1982) so, too, must universities search for clarity and consensus before excellence can be attained. Some colleges and universities are not attempting to clarify their institutional

cultures by studying the values which seem to be embraced. California State University, Long Beach, is relatively new as a university. Only 35 years old, it currently has over 32,000 students enrolled. Much of the energy has gone into handling this rapid growth, and there are few traditions and no strong image or sense of strong shared values. Recently, the University has become involved in an eight-campus consortium called "The Values Study," sponsored by a grant through the Society for Values in Higher Education. One phase of this study, a values inventory, involved interviews with over 80 faculty, administrators, and staff to try to clarify value issues, values which are seen as in a state of erosion, and the mirage values which are talked about but have no substance. The notes and numerous quotations from these interviews were summarized, with eight categories of concern about values emerging from the data. A steering committee focused on one of these categories: clarifying institutional identity. The quotations from the interviews yielded 315 metaphors, and their analysis became a useful tool in getting persons to talk about the institutional image. The University is now involved in a process to identify the core values of the institution. These will form the basis of a restatement of the mission and goals of the University and of various instructional units.

The fifth principle and practice relates to the kahunas' knowledge that there is a source of wisdom and power in each of us which can be a natural part of our everyday lives. Many other cultures also speak to us of this source of inner wisdom, hidden yet accessible, mystical yet practical, gentle yet powerful. This wisdom is variously called: the collective unconscious, the still small voice, the muse, the Holy Spirit. Egyptians referred to it as Horus, the sacred falcon—symbol of the Creative Principle, who sits on your shoulder, cradles you with compassionate wings and whispers Divine Truth into your ear.

The kahuna sees humans as having three souls or aspects—a Low Self, Middle Self, and High Self. The High Self is similar to the superconscious and is composed of

both a male and female essence. The Middle Self is logical, sometimes cynical, influenced by guilt and doubt. The Low Self is emotional, visually oriented, similar to the subconscious. These selves or spirits are called kino (body) and aka (shadowy). Aka has several meanings including "the essence of anything, in the spiritual rather than material form." It also can mean a shadow, and, in a sense, a living person's spirit (Pukui, Haertig, & Lee, 1972, p. 10). It has the additional meaning "of being a luminous extension away from the body" (Steiger, 1971). According to this reference, the two lower selves reside with the physical body, but the High Self does not. A cord made of aka connects the three selves, and they work as a team, using the body's supply of vital force, called mana, which also means spiritual power. When a person developed an illness, a conflict, or a problem that could not be solved, it was immediately assumed that there was a block in the cord that ran from the Low Self to the High Self, for the High Self was extremely powerful and could solve all problems unless its power was blocked. Thoughts are considered as real as things, and clusters of thoughts having to do with fear or guilt or negativity block the connection, the cord, to the High Self. Wrongs must be acknowledged and righted, forgiveness asked, reparation made, before power can flow to the High Self and problems be solved. The free flow of mana or power from the Low Self to the High Self was the key to the power used by the kahunas, as well as by any others who understood and used the process.

The conscious, rational, or Middle Self cannot tap into this power—only the subconscious, emotional, or Lower Self can do this. The request to be made in the great Ha prayer rite must be a clear picture, a detailed visualization of what is desired, and this is to be repeated each day until the results are satisfying.

An exercise used by kahuna Abraham Kauai'i starts with the visualization of oneself as an immense powerful mountain. A river of light and energy springs from the head and divides to cascade down one's arms as two rushing streams. Each breath taken creates more power and energy moving from the peak of the mountain down the

course of the rivers. This energy is then directed to a need, a project, a hoped-for event, another person—calling forth completion, healing, accomplishment, materialization. The sense of Self as Mountain-of-Power is unforgettable.

The kahuna and the professional development practitioner, then, have come together from across cultural boundaries to celebrate common commitments:

- participation in the discipline of training
- respect for the power of words
- utilization of the power of visual imagery
- focus on mediation as mission
- identification of shared values as unifying forces
- reliance on inner wisdom
- commitment to passing on the Light—the new way to know and to be—to the next generation.

There is a song from another island which says:

We come from the mountain,
All of us, the mountain.
Go back to the mountain,
Turn the world around.

The kahuna says: “You are that mountain. Go back to your Self.” Hawaiians say: “Nana i ke kumu. Look to the Source.”

You have within you that Source.
Look to your Source.
Turn your world around.

APPENDIX

This guided imagery exercise, similar to those used by Jean Houston and Ira Progoff, assists persons in gaining access to and using the inner wisdom we all possess. It is sometimes not appropriate for those in therapy or counseling to go through this exercise unless it is used by the counselor as part of the healing process. Most people find the exercise a useful tool for personal growth. Tape recording the exercise allows for fuller participation.

Become very comfortable in your chair with a hand on

each side of your lap. Just be aware of your breathing, in and out, relaxing. Now take a deep breath, hold it Then let it out and let your breathing return to normal. Once again take a deep breath and hold it (count off five seconds). Now let it out. Imagine that with each quiet breath there is a golden liquid which comes in at your feet. The characteristic of this golden liquid is that it relaxes and comforts you wherever it moves. It is coming into your feet, relaxing and comforting. With each inward breath the golden liquid moves higher up your calves, knees, and thighs, relaxing and comforting. The liquid moves into your hips, your pelvic area, your abdomen, relaxing and comforting. As you breathe, the liquid moves into your chest and back, into your shoulders and neck, and down your arms into your hands and fingers. The golden liquid moves to your head, into your chin, your cheeks, your mouth, nose, eyes, forehead, filling your head, your brain, your cranium, soothing and relaxing you.

See yourself walking along the beach on a beautiful sunny day. You look up the cliff side above the beach and see a cave up about fifteen feet. You walk up a path to this cave and find it to be spacious with a sandy floor. As you explore it, you discover an ancient metal door on the floor of the cave with a carved ring in the center. As you pull on the ring, the door swings up, revealing a staircase with ten steps going down into the earth. As you begin to walk down these steps you find that with each step you are more relaxed, peaceful, and yet expectant. One-two-three-four-five. You are calm, more relaxed. Six-seven-eight-nine-ten. At the foot of the stairs is a short hall leading to a massive door with a carved wooden sign that says "Room of Inner Wisdom." You walk eagerly toward the door and know that when you open it you will find someone within—a wise and compassionate person—who is expecting your visit. In a moment you will enter this room and spend some time in dialogue with this person. There may be surprises. The person may be serious or comic. It may be someone who is new to you. It may be someone from history, or a divine or mythological figure. The questions you ask will be responded to as you talk together. Go now and

open the door and meet this guide. The few minutes of clock time will be all the time you need. (Take four or five minutes, timed.)

Now it is time to leave this place where you have contacted your Guide to Inner Wisdom. Say goodbye and leave the room, knowing you can return whenever you choose. Go back up the ten steps, feeling energy and joy as you enter the cave and close the door. Go out of the cave and down the path to the beach, noticing the sunlight on the sea, the calls of the birds, the sound of the waves. You are also noticing a new awareness of your connection to your own source of inner wisdom. You are wide awake and full of vitality and power. Now become aware of this room and the people in it.

You will find it increasingly easy to have access to inner wisdom, and as you practice and learn to trust the process, you will not need an elaborate procedure for getting to it.

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